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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/976,324	10/12/2001	Hiroyoshi Yamaguchi	AB-1167 US	9209

32605 7590 05/12/2003

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EXAMINER

BURNHAM, SARAH C

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3636

DATE MAILED: 05/12/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/976,324

Applicant(s)

YAMAGUCHI ET AL.

Examiner

Sarah C. Burnham

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1 and 2 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1 and 2 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☒ The proposed drawing correction filed on 16 April 2003 is: a) ☒ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) ____.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). ____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: ____.

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. Claims 1-2 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Aumont et al. (6,048,034) in view of Pajon et al. (6,050,635). Aumont et al. discloses a vehicle occupant restraint system provided in association with a vehicle seat (1) comprising a pair of fixed support members (9) attached to either side of a seat frame (4) at a front part (unlabeled) of a seat bottom (3); an arm (5) pivotally attached to a front end (unlabeled) of each of said fixed support members (9); and a cross member (10) extending between free ends (unlabeled) of arms (5). Aumont et al. also discloses how tilt adjustment means, including an inertia wheel (21) and linkage (20), "could be replaced with any other control means and especially by electric [i.e. power] actuators" (column 8, lines 3-4). Aumont et al. discloses all claimed elements with the exception of a cross member comprising an energy absorbing structure that further comprises a relatively deformable member.

Pajon et al. teaches the use of a cross member (5) with an "energy dissipation means consist[ing] of a cellular foam cushion (11) placed on cross member (5)" (column 5, lines 41-42).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the instant invention to add the energy absorbing structure (11) taught by Pajon et al. to the cross member (10) revealed by Aumont et al. Such an addition would ensure that the cross member (10) is able to absorb "the thrust exerted by the user's pelvis" (column 5, line 45) during an impact situation. Absorption of this force will help "avoid exaggerated compression of the lumbar region" (column 5, line 52).

Conclusion

3. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

The following patents are cited to further show the state of the art with respect to occupant restraint systems with upwardly pivoting seat bottoms:

- Beauvais et al. (5,022,707)
- Racine (2,970,862)
- Tokarz et al. (6,361,109)

4. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Sarah C. Burnham whose telephone number is 703-305-7315. The examiner can normally be reached on M-Th 7:30 am - 5:00 pm.


If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Peter Cuomo can be reached on 703-308-1020. The fax phone numbers for

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the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are 703-872-9326 for regular communications and 703-872-9327 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-306-1113.

SCB
May 6, 2003


Peter M. Cuomo
Supervisory Patent Examiner
Technology Center 3600